24 May 1979
OIA-46/79


MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT     :   Career Development for Graphics and Publications
                Production Personnel


    The agency has developed a number of career development programs aimed at providing broadening and career-enhancing opportunities for employees. These programs have a concurrent benefit of raising the overall professionalism and capabilities of the Agency. Unfortunately, there is no such program for people involved in graphics and publications production -- specifically editors, designers, illustrators, visual information specialists, draftsmen, and printers.

    As I preceive it, the purpose of career development programs is to assist the employee in realizing his full potential by providing him with a series of courses and work assignments designed to build a stronger foundation for growth and mobility. One gains -- as a result of these programs -- a more precise sense of direction, an increased knowledge of his field, a better understanding of the Agency and its missions and functions, and a better understanding of how things interrelate. The Agency in turn benefits by gaining an employee who, as a result of training and work-related experiences, is capable of producing a more professional and more useful product.

    An example of one of these programs presently in operation involves the rotation of analysts -- between offices within their directorates, between directorates, and between agencies via TDYs. These rotational assignments give the analysts an opportunity to better communicate with their counterparts in other organizational components and, as a result of the cross-fertilization of ideas, allow them to grow in their fields. Senior-level managers, analysts, specialists in many areas, and administrative officers all enjoy this privilege and are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. Other types of programs also exist to help employees move ahead and realize their full potential. For example, the National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC) has its Advancement Opportunities Program and the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) its Director's Opportunity Program for clericals who want to move into the professional ranks. But for persons in the graphics and publications area, a great many of whom have degrees and many years of training and work experience, no such career development programs exist.

For persons like myself who are considered to be professionals but do not wish to become analysts or intelligence officers, the chances for attaining supergrade status are virtually nonexistent. An example of this would be my supervisor whose background is in the editorial field. In order for her to reach her present grade, she has had to broaden herself beyond the field of publications by taking on many unrelated duties. As this office's senior publications officer, her day-to-day involvement in publications production has been cut substantially. Another example is the present Chief of the NFAC Publications and Presentations Group, whose background, to my knowledge, is not in the area of publications production. While I don't question his administrative abilities, I do question the effect his appointment has on the morale of those whose careers have been in this field.

At present the Agency has a wealth of graphics and publications production talent--talent that is not being utilized to its fullest. The bulk of these people are located in three of the Agency's directorates -- the Directorate of Administration, the Directorate for Science and Technology, and the National Foreign Assessment Center. Each of the offices that are responsible for providing graphics and production support within these directorates are doing a reasonably good job--but it could be better. As things stand now, each directorate is doing its own thing and has virtually no communication with the others. And in some cases there is little or no communication between offices within the same directorate.

Some steps have been taken within NFAC to correct this problem -- specifically the creation of Publications and Presentation Group, the office that is tasked with coordinating NFAC's publication effort, and the establishment of a monthly meeting for senior NFAC production officers, at which they address problems of mutual concern. However, even with PPG coordinating the publications of NFAC, when decisions were being made concerning formats, for example, the capabilities of the Office of Imagery Analysis were apparently overlooked. Consequently OIA hard-copy publications don't quite conform in style to those produced by other NFAC offices.

A few years ago, the National Endowment of the Arts was tasked, by Executive Order, to do a study of the effectiveness of graphics communication in the Federal Government. The findings of the panel were at best dismal. Practically all agencies were found wanting, and the CIA -- with the exception of our cartographic effort -- faired no better.

Many designers in the government blamed the poor showing on the bureaucrats, saying that they were not amenable to change. My feeling is not that administrators can't change, but that, because graphics and production personnel are considered to serve a support function, we get lost in a bigger picture, which is the performance of the Agency's primary function. With no formally sponsored program for developing skills and what begins to appear to be little appreciation for one's effort, one develops a 9 to 5 mentality -- let me do my eight hours and let me out. It is this kind of thinking that makes it possible for government organizations to be accused of inefficiency. Most people working in government today are quite well qualified to do their jobs, but, in many cases, they are not utilized efficiently. If there is to be any growth for persons involved in graphics and publications production, the Agency is going to have to look at how efficiently it uses these people.

Alternative ways that may be considered for better utilizing these people are as follows:

1. Like the Office of Personnel, have personnel in graphics and publication housed administratively under one office with rotational assignments to offices that have graphics and publication responsibilities.

2. Create a career service that would free graphics and publications types from the career services of their parent offices. Our backgrounds differ greatly from those on the analytical or operational side of the house.

3. Let things remain as they are from an administrative standpoint but create rotational positions that would cross directorate lines, or at least inter-office lines.

4. Eliminate the circulation of vacancy notices within one directorate only.

5. Enforce a policy that says you look for qualified persons in-house to fill vacancies before recruiting on the outside.

6. Recruit for qualified editors, designers, and illustrators the same as you would for the analysts.

7. Create upward mobility positions for people who want to get into this field.

8. Hold annual or semi-annual seminars or workshops for persons in graphics and publications production where a communication can be set up and ideas can be exchanged.

As stated before, there is a wealth of talent in the Agency in the field of graphics and publications production. Editors can be found throughout NFAC and NPIC. Designers, visual information specialists, illustrators, cartographers, draftsmen, photographers, and printers can be found throughout the Agency as a whole -- in PPG, OIA, OGCR, NPIC, OTS, OTR, P&PD, and any number of small shops. Many of these people, like analysts, have spent many years developing their skills -- skills that should be recognized and encouraged to grow.

Respectfully,

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